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STATE FOR AIT/W
STATE FOR EAP/RSP/TC AND NP/NE ALEX BURKART
NRC FOR KEVIN BURKE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2010
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [PARM](#) [KNNP](#) [TW](#) [IAEA](#)
SUBJECT: AIT VISITS TAIWAN'S NUCLEAR SAFETY OPS CENTER

REF: 217577

Classified By: AIT DIRECTOR DOUGLAS PAAL, REASON 1.4 (b)

1. (C) Summary: AIT ECONOFF met with officials from Taiwan,s Atomic Energy Council (AEC) to discuss arrangements for the upcoming 2005 AIT/TECRO Joint Standing Committee on Civil Nuclear Cooperation. AEC officials provided a surprise tour of the new Nuclear Safety Duty Center (NSDC). A 24 hour &OPS Center⁸ for the three nuclear power plants that Taiwan operates as well as the fourth plant that is still under construction. During the tour, officials said that plans are being made to extend the life of the #1 nuclear power plant. End Summary.

2. (U) On October 13, ECONOFF visited AEC to discuss the logistics of the upcoming AIT/TECRO Meeting on Civil Nuclear Cooperation that will take place in Taipei November 1-4. The routine meeting was requested by the AEC to discuss details about the upcoming meeting such as transportation, schedules and media relations.

3. (C) After the meeting, Dr. Chen Wei-li, AEC,s Deputy Director of the Department of Planning, surprised ECONOFF by taking him on a tour of AEC,s NSDC. The NSDC was built two years ago and functions as the 24-hour control room for the three nuclear power plants that Taiwan operates. In the event of an emergency, Taiwan officials will report to the NSDC to organize a response. Every year the AEC conducts a simulation of an emergency at one of the nuclear power plants. AEC officials stressed the redundant planning that went into the NSDC. In case of power failure there are two back-up generators and satellite telephones.

4. (U) AEC makes a surprising amount of information about the NSDC,s operations available to the public. The same screens that provide information at the NSDC on actual conditions at the power plants can be accessed online at www.aec.gov.tw/www/events/gammadetect.php At any time, the public can see radiation measurements and other statistics from all three power plants in real time. The NSDC also monitors twelve news channels to allow them to respond to any media reports about nuclear power.

5. (C) AIT ECONOFF asked about plans to extend the life of the #1 nuclear power plant. Dr. Ni Maw-Sherng, AEC,s Director of the Department of Nuclear Technology said that the #1 nuclear power plant,s estimated lifespan ends in 2017 and that the current plan is to decommission the plant in 2010. However, he told AIT that there are preparations being done at Taipower to extend the life of the plant past 2017. In order to extend the lifespan of a nuclear power plant, Dr. Ni said, preparations need to start 8-12 years before the estimated end of the plant,s lifespan. Taiwan needs to start preparing now if it wants to extend the life of the #1 nuclear power plant. Dr. Ni prefaced his statement on Taipower,s plans by saying that life extension is not possible &under the current political situation.⁸

6. (C) AEC Officials told AIT that they have no intention of developing nuclear weapons. They remarked that the International Atomic Energy Agency,s (IAEA) annual inspection in Taiwan is always directed toward Taiwan,s attempt twenty years ago at developing an atomic bomb. Dr. Chen said &I wasn,t there twenty years ago but they keep asking me questions as if I would know the answers.⁸

7. (C) Comment: AEC Officials were keen to promote the new NSDC and to show AIT that they are serious about nuclear power safety. Officials believe that it is becoming increasingly unlikely that Taiwan will decommission the first nuclear power plant on the scheduled target date of 2010. In the meantime, they are actively engaged in making sure nuclear power has a future in Taiwan. End Comment.

PAAL